

Hayes, Katherine

From: Meg Lincoln [meg_lincoln@yahoo.com]

Sent: Monday, March 16, 2009 9:43 AM

To: Friis, John

Subject: Support for HB6666 Section 5

Dear Chairs and Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Meg Lincoln and I am currently a tenth grader at both North Haven High School and Educational Center for the Arts. I am here to urge you to support **Bill 6666, Sec. 5**, so that my teachers may continue to teach with adjunct instructor certificates.

In North Haven, I am receiving only the best of what the public school system has to offer me, and I am aware of exactly how fortunate I am. By comparison, though, I often feel my day truly starts when I leave the high school by bus to be in New Haven by one o'clock. At my sending school I learn about quadratics and genetics, pore over epics and practice French. I do not exaggerate, however, in saying that when I began last year at my beloved arts magnet school, I learned more about writing, art, and humanity itself in those first few months than I had previously learned in my entire life.

When asked general questions about ECA and what I do there, I am especially proud to tell people that my creative writing classes are taught by working and published writers. Given that I have felt compelled to write since I first began narrating my own life in my head, this has been an endlessly illuminating experience for me. These people, whether certified or not, manage to both do and teach. The literary world, with its overlapping movements, is constantly fluid, and they will be up to date with what they bring to us from it for as long as they are inside it.

The environment at ECA is uniquely intimate. In our small, mixed-grade classes, we students form a community of artists. Our teachers inspire us by introducing other writers' work to us and initiating discussions of them. They guide us through critiques of each other's writing, and I have not only vastly improved mine, but learned how to take criticism without taking it personally, and how to offer criticism without meaning it personally. Needless to say, these are extremely important skills for

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anyone attempting to write professionally, and no way of acquiring them is more direct than through professional writers themselves. As in any apprenticeship model, we have a heightened level of respect for our teachers at ECA because we see that they are able to practice what they preach, because they have devoted their lives to what we want to do as well as showing us how to do it. At the same time, they bridge the gap between authority figure and student, between students and each other. Our time here is transformed from a competitive to a collaborative effort, an atmosphere of support and positive pressure that I never want to lose.

I join my fellow students, teachers, and advocates in strongly urging the committee to pass HB6666 with the amendment in Section 5 to protect our teachers' part-time jobs. Thank you for your attention.